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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 004906

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SUBJECT: ALLAWI CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Classified By: Classified by Political Counselor Robert S. Ford for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary. Former PM Ayad Allawi's Campaign Manager, Renda Rahim Rancke, met with PolOffs on December 7 to provide them with proof of serious campaign violations and copies of the 55 complaints filed with the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI). She encouraged Embassy efforts to ensure the IECI responds to such charges. (As reported SEPTEL, we have pushed the Commission to do so.) End Summary.

Campaign Headquarters Atmospherics

2. (C) Allawi's campaign headquarters is situated on a large compound adjacent to the International Zone and consists of three buildings with one multi-story building mounted with Allawi's stallion symbol on the front. A large poster of Allawi greets visitors at the outside gate. Two large outdoor dining areas covered with colorful awnings are set up on the lawn. Security was apparent, passing through a modern metal detector, x-ray machine, and physical pat-down. In the lobby, there were several people milling about with five assistants sitting in Deputy Operations Campaign Manager Dr. Azzam al-Wash's outer office. Dr. al-Wash himself seemed to embody the campaign's flurry of activity when he interrupted PolOff's meeting only to say a few words, grab his briefcase and a bottle of water.

Complaints to IECI go unanswered

3. (C) Allawi's Campaign Manager Renda Rahim met with PolOffs to provide copies of 55 unanswered complaints of serious campaign violations previously submitted to the IECI. According to Rahim, the IECI has not responded to any of these complaints. She sifted through several of the violations to point out how the Shia Alliance (555) is conducting a smear campaign that not only attacks Allawi but also threatens anyone who deigns to vote for him.

4. (SBU) Rahim also provided PolOffs with photos of Shia Alliance (Badr Corps) banners that insinuate that the Alliance has the blessing of the Marja'iyah and posters of Allawi's face melded with Saddam's. In addition, she provided PolOffs with a short video of policemen in Baghdad tearing down Allawi posters at night.

5. (C) On December 8, Rahim expressed to PolOff her disgust with these criminal campaign tactics. She urged EmbOffs to intervene, make a public statement denouncing these measures, and put pressure on the IECI to sanction political coalitions violating IECI campaign regulations. She stated that the Allawi team has worked very hard on its media campaign that engages in television advertisements, wide distribution of posters and leaflets, personal appearances, rallies, and cultural events. It is a shame that other parties can destroy all this hard work by engaging in dirty campaign tactics, Rahim commented.

Comment

6. (C) Rahim is influential in many circles; articulate, extremely capable, and aware of the issues. She strongly believes in Ayad Allawi's candidacy, becoming his Campaign Manager, even after Allawi's Advisor Rosum al-Awadi removed her name from the Baghdad candidate roster without her knowledge. Rahim told PolOff that she was very disappointed that she will not be able to participate in Iraqi politics at the Council of Representatives level.
KHALILZAD